



"Better Communities Through Cooperation"

January 22, 2007

To Whom It May Concern:

Since 2000, the Blackfoot Drought & Water Conservation Committee has worked with water users in the Blackfoot to address drought related issues. The primary approach to drought management in the Blackfoot watershed has been the Blackfoot Drought Response in which all water users are asked to reduce water demand during low flows in order to maintain in-stream flows and protect fisheries resources. While this approach has been very effective, the committee recognizes the need for more long-term water conservation planning and increasing water use efficiency.

Our Renewable Resource Grant and Loan (DNRC RRGL) application includes both maintaining the Blackfoot Drought Response and increasing long-term water conservation efforts. The Blackfoot Drought Response portion of our application focuses on continued education and outreach to Blackfoot water users on drought related issues as well as implementation of the Blackfoot Drought Response in 2007-2009. The long-term water conservation portion of the application focuses on improving irrigation efficiency through pivot system evaluations, improving use and understanding of soil moisture monitors, and gaining a better understanding of irrigation systems and their relation to dewatered streams in the watershed.

We estimate that there are about 80 pivots currently operating in the Blackfoot and expect that number to increase over the next 10 years. By evaluating pivots, we can identify where pivots are underperforming and where energy and water savings could be realized through basic system maintenance. Looking into the future, we hope these efforts lead into working with more irrigators on comprehensive water use management plans.

Implementation of the proposed projects under this application would be a big step forward in long-term water conservation and drought management efforts in the Blackfoot watershed. The Blackfoot Challenge, North Powell Conservation District, and our partners are grateful for this opportunity and excited about the potential benefits to water resources and irrigators in the Blackfoot watershed.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Brian W. McDonald". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Brian" and last name "McDonald" clearly legible.

Brian McDonald
Blackfoot Drought & Water Conservation Program Coordinator